

[R. A. Perry]

Range-lore

Annie McAulay

Maverick, Texas [???

RANGE-LORE

R. A. Perry was born in Travis County, Texas, January 5, 1877.

Mr. Perry says: "We moved with our household furniture, a few plow tools and two hundred head of cattle, to Runnels County in 1890. Much of the country was still open range then. My father leased fourteen sections of land at five cents per acre. He liked the looks of the country around Rowena, which was just a flag station on the Santa Fe then, and he purchased enough land near the station for a little farm and ranch.

"I learned to ride in Travis County. Everybody rode horseback then of course. My father always kept several saddle horses and a bunch of cattle so I learned to punch cattle while just a kid. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 "After I was about grown I got a job from Perry Gay. I learned to ride broncs and the harder they bucked and the more devilish they was the more I enjoyed conquering them for the saddle.

"I worked in Pecos County for the 3C [?] for a few years. It was a big outfit. They always kept lots of horses. The best bronc buster I ever knew was Walt Spears. He broke horses all over this country, and later rode with rodeos. They never got too bad for him to try, and he generally rode 'em, too.

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"I knew a woman rider, a Mrs. Day. Her husband was a ranch foreman. She rode lots and always helped with the round-ups. She made a real good cowhand.

'Then Mr. [Lummas?]- a rancher I worked for had a couple of daughters that were good riders. They could ride and rope as good as any hand on the place and better than some I've seen.

"I remember a stampede over near Mt. Margaret in Coke County. A feller named Murry was bossing the drives. We was movin' a herd from the 3C's at Pecos to Ft. Worth. Sam Neff, a brother of ex-Governor, Pat Neff, was with us. We had camped for the night in Lum Hudson Hudson's six-section pasture. We had just got the cattle bedded down for the night and feeling safe and sound. We didn't intend to even keep a watch that night, so sure were we that the cattle couldn't get very far. Well, it began lightning and thundering and soon a heavy cloud made up and looked very threatening. The cattle got restless. We tried to hold them together for a while, but soon they broke into a run. The boss told us to let 'em go. We just knew they couldn't get very far. But they broke the fence, in fact they tore down a string of fence two miles long. It was some frightened herd. Next morning, to our surprise and sorrow, we couldn't find hair nor hide of any of them. They was clean gone. It took us three weeks to get 'em together again and then I think we lost a few.

"When I worked for Mr. Gay, he had a pasture that extended from the Colorado river to the Concho. When he got ready to work the pasture or to have a round-up, we'd usually begin at the Concho and work north, rounding up on the bank of the Colorado. But at Pecos where I worked it was all open country and we'd work only a small area at the time. They'd always have a range boss and maybe several outfits and some nesters. And they'd all take orders from the range boss and cut their cattle as they were rounded up and hold them until all the territory had been covered.

"They used to deal out misery to the green hands. Sometimes they'd hold Kangaroo Court, and of course find the accused one guilty of some made-up crime. Then he had to take his

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punishment. Often they'd whip him with leggins, or make him ride a buckin' horse. Maybe they'd have him do some onery job for some of the boys just to embarrass him. Of course it was all in fun and he didn't get mad, he had to take it.

"I still keep a little bunch of cattle and sheep, just for company, and to keep me from getting lonesome for the old ranching days."

REFERENCE

R. A. Perry, Miles, Texas. Interviewed May 19, 1938.